
*A Voyage of the Emperor of China, into the Western
Tartary, in the Year, 1683.*

THe Emperor this Year, which is the 30th. of his Age, made a Voyage into the western *Tartary*, together with the Queen his Grand-mother, which they call the *Queen Mother*, he departed the 16. of *July*, in the Company of more than 60000 Men, and 100000 Horse. He positively resolved, that I, with one of the two Fathers that were at the Court of *Pekin*, the Choise of which he left to me, should follow him. I chose Father *Philip Grimaldi*; because he is the most known, and because he perfectly understood the *Mathematicks*.

Several Reasons prevailed with the Emperor to Enterprize this Journey. The first was, that he might keep his Militia during the Peace as well as in the Warrs, in continual Exercise; and for this Reason it was, that after he had establish'd a firm Peace in all the Quarters of this so vast an Empire; he recalled his best Troops hither out of every Province, and resolved in his Council to make every Year Expeditions of this kind, in several Seasons, that by hunting of Deer, Bores, Bears, and Tigres, they might learn to overcome the Enemies of the Empire, or at least to prevent the cooling of their Courage, or the degenerating from their pristine Valour, by the Luxury of *China*, in a too long Repose.

In effect these kinds of Hunting had more of the shew of a Military Expedition, then of one for Divertisement, as I have already noted: The Emperor took in his Train, 100000 Horse, and above 60000 Men, all armed with Arrows and Cimeters, divided into Companys and Marching

ing in Battell-Array after their Colours, with the found of Drums and Trumpets: During their Hunting, they intirely invested the Mountains and Forrests, as if they had been Cities which they designed to Beleaguer; following in this, the manner of Hunting used by the eastern *Tartars*, of which I have spoken in my last Letter. This Army had its Vanguard and Rere-guard, and its main Body, its Right Wing and left Wing, was commanded by so many Generals and petty Kings. There were spent more then Seventy days before they were on their March, in bringing together all the Ammunitions of the Army upon the Waggons, upon the Camels, upon the Horses, and upon the Mules, by reason of the Incommodious Ways. For in all the western *Tartary* (I call it western) not with Relation to *China*, which Lyeth in Respect of it westward it self, but with respect of the Eastern *Tartary*) there is nothing to be found but Mountains, Rocks, and Vallies, there are neither Cities, Towns, nor Villages, nor so much as any Houses. The Inhabitants Lodge under Tents, pitched on all sides in the open Feilds. They are for the most part Grasers, and transport their Tents from one Vally to another, according as the Pastures are better. There they Pasture their Beefs, their Horses, and their Camels, they breed no Hoggs, nor any of those other Animals, which else where are fed in the Villages, as Poultry and Geese. But only of such as the Herbs, which an uncultivated Land doth Naturally produce, will serve to sustain. They pass their Life either in Hunting, or doing nothing. And as they neither Sow nor cultivate the Earth, so they make no Harvest. They Live upon Milk, Cheese, and Flesh, and have a sort of Wine, not much unlike our Aqua-vitæ; with which they make their Feasts, and are often Drunk. In short they care for nought from Morning to Night, but to Drink and Eat; like the Beasts, and Drovers which they Feed.

They are not without their Preists, which they call *Lamas*, for whome they have a singular Veneration, in which they differ from the Oriental *Tartars*; the most part of
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whome have no Religion, nor do they beleive any God. For the rest both of the one and the other are Slaves, and wholly depend upon the Will of their Masters, whose Religion and Manners they blindly follow : Like in this to their Doves, who go where they are Lead, and not where they ought to go.

This part of *Tartary*, Lyes without the prodigious Wall of *China* about 1000 *Chinese Stadia*, that is to say more than 300 *European Miles*, and extends from the North-east towards the north.

The Emperor Rides on Horse-back, in the Head of his Army through these Desert Places, & these Steep Mountains, and far from great Roads, exposed all the Day to the Scorplings of the Sun, to the Rains, and to all the Injuries of the Air. Many of those which had been in the last Warr, assured me, that they had not suffered so much during all that, as during this Hunting. Infomuch that the Emperor, whose principal Aim it was, to give his Forces a Breathing, performed effectually what he pretended.

The second Reason he had of undertaking this Journy, was that he might keep the western *Tartars* in their Duty, and to Prevent any purnitious Designs, that might be formed against the States.

It was for this that he entred their Country with so great an Army, and with so great Preparations for Warr. Having carried along several great Gunns, that he might cause them to be Discharged from time to time into the Vallies, and by the Noyse and Fire which issued out of the Mouths of those Dragons, which served to ornament them, he might cast a Dread upon the Rout.

Besides this great Retinue, he would yet be accompanied with all the Marks of Grandure, with which he was invironed at the Court of *Pekin*. To wit, with a Multitude of Drums, Trumpets, Timbals, and other Musical Instruments, which formed Consorts During his sitting at Table, when he entered the Pallace, or when he went out. He caused all these

these to march with him, that he might by this outward Pomp Astonish these *Barbarous* People, to stricke them with a Fear and Respect of his Emperial Majesty.

For the Empire of *China* never had any Enemies more to be feared than these Western *Tartars*; which beginning on the east of *China* incompass it with an almost Infinite of people, and keep it as it were continually beleagured on the North and West sides thereof; and 'twas to make a Bulwork against their IncurSIONS, that a *Chinese* Emperor in Antient times caused this great Wall to be Built, which seperates *China* from their Countrey. I have passed it fower times, and have considered it very attentively. And I can say without Hyperbolizing, that all the seven Wonders of the World put together, are not comparable to this worke. And all that *Fame* has spred concerning it among the *Europeans*, is far short of what I my self have seen.

Two things have more especially caused my Admiration. The first is, that in this long extent from the East to the West, it passes in several places not only through vast champanes, but also above the tops of exceeding high Mountains, upon which it is raised by little, and little, and Fortified at certaine Intervales with great Towers; not distant the one from the other more then two flight shot. At our return I had the curiosity to measure the height of it in one place by meanes of an Instrument, and I found that it was in that place 1037 *Geometrical feet* above the Horizon; in such sort that 'tis hard to comprehend how 'twas possible to Elevate this Enormous Bulwork to the hight we saw it, in places dry and full of Mountains, whence they must be obliged to bring from a great distance with Incredible Labour, the Water, Brick, Morter, and all the Materials necessary for so great a Work.

The second thing that Surprised me was that this Wall is not continued upon the same Line, but bent in divers places following the Situation of the Mountains, in such manner that instead of one Wall, one may say that there are

three, which Inviron all this great Part of *China*.

After all, The Monarch which in our Days hath Re-united the *Chinese* and the *Tartars*, under one and the same Government, has done some things more for the advantage of the Security of *China*, than the *Chinese* Emperor that Built the long Wall. For after having Reduced the Western *Tartars*, partly by Artifice, partly by Force of Armes: He has Oblieged them to go and remaine at 300 Miles Distance from the Wall of *China*; and in this place he Distributs to them Lands and Pastures, whilst he has given their Country to other *Tartars*, his Subjects which have their Habitation there at present: Notwithstanding which these Western *Tartars* are so Powerful, that if they should agree together, they might make themselves Masters of all *China*, and of the Eastern *Tartary*, Even in the face of the Oriental *Tartars*.

I have said, that the *Tartarian* Monarch that Conquered *China*, used an expedient for Subduing the Western *Tartars*. For one of his first Cares was to engage to his Interest by his Royal Bounties, and by Demonstration of a Singular Affection, the *Lamas* (or *Preists*) these Men having a great Repute above all those of their Nation, easily perswaded them to Submit to the Government of so great a Prince, and 'tis in consideration of this Service done to the Estate, that the present Emperor looks upon these *Lamas* with a favourable Eye, that he bestows Presents on them; and that he makes use of them to keep the *Tartars* in the Obedience which they owe him: Tho' at the Botom he hath nothing but Dis esteem for their Persons, and looks upon them as a Sort of Ignorant Fellows, which have not the least Tincture of the Sciences or Commendable Arts, in which without doubt this Prince shews a Wise Policy, in so Disguiseing his true Sentiments, by these Exterior Marks of Esteem and Goodwil.

He has Divided this Vastly extended Country into 48 *Provinces*, who have Submitted and are Tributary to him.

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From whence it comes to pass, that the Emperor that Reigns at present in *China*, and in the one and the other *Tartary*, may justly be called the Greatest and most Powerful Monark of *Asia*, having so many vast Estates under him, without being any where interrupted by the Territory of any Forrein Prince, and he alone being as the Soule which gives Motion to all the Members of so vast a Body.

For after he had charged himself with the Government, he did not at all intrust the Care to any of the *Chelacs*, nor to any of the great Men of his Court. He has not at all suffered, that the Eunucks of the Palace, or any of his Pages, or any of the young Lords that have been Raised by him, should dispose of the least thing in his House, or should Regulate any thing of themselves: which appears very extraordinary; especially if we examine what Customes his Predecessors were wont to use.

He Chastises with wonderful Equity the Great Ones as well as the Inferiors; he Deprives them of their Charges, and makes them descend from the Rank they held, Proportioning always the Penalty to the Heinousness of their Fault. He takes Cognisance of the Affairs which are transacted in the Royal Council, and in the other Tribunals, even to the causing them to Render to him, an exact account of the Judgments there given. In one word, he of himself Disposes and Orders all things; and 'tis by reason of the Absolute Authority which he hath thus acquired, that the greatest Lords of the Court, and Persons of the highest Quality in the Empire; even the Princes of the Blood, never appear in his Presence, but with a Profound Respect.

But to what remains, the *Lamas* or *Tartarian* Priests, of whome we have spoken, are not only respected by the People, but also by the Lords and Princes of their Nation, who for Politick Ends testify to them a great deale of Freindship: This makes us fear that the Christian Religion, will not find so easy an Entrance into the Western *Tartary*. They are also very powerful upon the Mind of the Queen

Mother, who is of their Country, and who is at Present Threescore and Ten Years Old; they are wont to tell her, that the Sect (of which she makes Profession) has no more declared Enemy than us. And 'tis a kind of Miracle, or at least an extraordinary Protection of God, that notwithstanding this, the Emperor, who has very much Regard and Respect for her, has not hitherto ceased to heap on us Graces and Honours, considering us after an other manner than the *Lamas*.

During the Journey, as the Princes and the cheif Officers of the Army went often times to the Queen to attend at her Court; and that we also were advertised to do so likewise: We were willing first to consult a Person of the Court, who loved us very much, and who spake for us to the Emperor in our Affairs. This Lord having entered the Princes Tent, told him what had passed, and presently coming out again: *The Emperor (said he to us) has given me to understand, that 'tis not at all necessary for you to attend the Queen as others do; which made us to apprehend enough, that this Princess did not Favour us.*

The 3^d. Reason which the Emperor had for making this Journey, was for his Health: Because he knew by Experience long enough, that when he is too long at *Pekin* without going abroad, he cannot avoid his being attacked by several Distempers, which he prevents by means of these long Progresses. For during the whole time he never sees any Woman; and that which is more surprizing, there appears not any one in all this Great Army, except those which are of the Retinue of the Queen Mother: 'Tis yet also a Novelty that she has accompanied the King this Year, it having not been practised above once, when he took with him the three Queens as far as the Capital City of the Province of *Leiotum*, to visit the Sepulchres of their Ancestors.

The Emperor and the Queen Mother pretend moreover by this Journey, to avoid the excessive Heats which are in
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Pekin, in the Summer during the Dog-days. For in this Part of *Tartary*, there Reigns during the Moneths of *July* and *August* so cold a Wind, especially in the Night, that 'tis necessary to put on thick Cloths and Furrs. The Reason that may be assigned for this so extraordinary Cold, is that this Region is very much elevated and full of Mountains: There is one amongst the rest, upon which we continually ascended, for the space of 5 or 6 Dayes March. The Emperor being desirous to know, how much it surmounted the Plains of *Pekin*, Distant about 300 Miles; at our Return (after having measured the Height of above a Hundred Mountains that lay in our Road) we found that it had 3000 *Geometrical Paces* of Elevation, above the Sea that nearest approached *Pekin*.

The Salt Peter also with which these Countrys abound, may contribute to this great Cold, which is so Violent, that in Digging the Earth to 3 or 4 *foot* deep, there are fetched out Clods all Frozen and peices of Ice.

Divers of the Petty Kings of the Western *Tartary*, came from all Sides for 300 Miles, and some for 500 Miles, together with their Children, to Salute the Emperor. These Princes, who for the most part know none but their own Natural Language, which is very different from that of the Eastern *Tartary*, took Regard of us, with Aspects and Gestures of a Goodness very particular. There were some amongst them, who had made a Journey to *Pekin* to see the Court, and who had seen our Church.

One or two days before we arrived at the Mountain which was the boundary of our Journey, we met a Petty King very aged, who returned from accompanying the Emperor, he seeing us stayed with all his Retinue, and enquired by his Interpreter, which of us was called *Naubonij*, one of our Servants having made a Signe that it was I; this Prince accosted me with a great deal of Civility, and told me that for a long time he had known my Name, and that he had desired to know me. He spoke also to Father *Grimaldi*,
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with the same Marks of Affection. The favourable Entertainment he gave us in this Rancounter, gave some Reason to hope that our Religion might find an easy Entrance to those Princes, particularly if care be taken to insinuate into the Minds of those Princes, by the Means of the Mathematicks: Which if there should at any time be a Designe to penetrate into their Country: The most sure way for divers Reasons, (which I have not the Leisure to Explain here) will be to begin the Entrance with the other *Tartars* more Remote, which are not at all Subjects of this Empire, from whom we may pass on to these, advancing by little and little towards *China*.

During the whole Journy, the Emperor has continued to give us singular Tokens of his Good Will, shewing us Favours in the Sight of his Army, which he shewed to none besides.

One time meeting us in a great Vally, where we were measuring the height and the distance of some Mountains, he made a Stay with the whole Court, and calling to us from a great distance, he demanded of us in the *Chinese* Language, *Hao mo?* that is to say, are you well in Health? And then asked us several Questions in the *Tartarean* Language, concerning the height of these Mountains, to which I answered also in the same Language; after which turning to the Lords that were about him, he discoursed with them concerning us in very obliging Expressions, as I learned the same Night from the Prince his Uncle, who was then by his side.

He testified also his Affection to us, by causing often meat to be carryed to our Tents from his own Table willing also that on some Occasions we should eat in his; and every time he did us this Honour, he had a Regard to our Days of Abstinence, and of Fasting, sending us only such Meats as we could use.

The eldest Son of the Emperor after the Example of his Father, gave us Marks also of his Bounty, for having been

constrained to stay more than 10 days, by reason of a Fall from his Horse, by which he was hurt in his right Shoulder; and one part of the Army in which we were, having attended, whilst the Emperor with the other continued his Hunting, he was not wanting in sending to us daily, and sometimes twice a day during this space, Food from his own Table. In fine, we lookt on all these Favours of the Royal Family, as the Effects of a particular Providence which watched over us, and over Christianity, for which we had so much the more occasion to thank God, for that the Affection of the Emperor, was never so constantly shewn to the Grandees of the Empire, nor to the Princes of the Blood.

As to what relates to the other Particularities of our Journey, they are likewise to those which happened to us the last Year, in the Journey to the Eastern *Tartary*, which I have fully describ'd in my last Letter; that is to say, that we made use of the Emperors Horses, and of his Litters, that we lodged in the Tents, and eat at the Table of the Prince his Uncle, to whome he had particularly recommended us.

During more than 600 *miles*, which we had pass'd in going and returning (for we did not return by the same Road) he caus'd to be made a great High-way cross the Mountains and the Vallies, for the Queen Mother, who went in a Charriot; he caus'd also an infinite of Bridges to be made over the Torrents, as also the Rocks to be cut, and the Points of the Mountains, with incredible Pains and Expences: Father *Grimaldi* shall describe the other particulars in his Letter.

As to the benefit which the Religion may draw from our Journey, I have spoken elsewhere; it sufficeth to say that the Emperor, to whose Will we cannot make the least resistance, without exposing all this mission to a manifest Danger, has order'd us to follow him. I ceas'd not however to speak twice to that Lord of the Court, who is our
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particular Friend, to excuse us for the time to come, from these long Journies, and especially me, *who am not of an Age fit for it*: I tryed to obtain at least that they would be contented to take only one of us; the Letters of our Fathers were daily brought us during the Journey, and I had the convenience of writing to them, by means of the Carriers which continually went to and came from the Royal City: I write all this in haste, that I may continue to give you an Account of our Affairs.

*An Explanation, necessary to justify the Geography
supposed in these Letters.*

IT may seem wonderful, that the Author of these Letters makes mention in his former, of a kind of Warr between the *Oriental Tartars* and the *Moscovites*, notwithstanding the extream distance, these People appear to be from one another in our Geographical Charts; but those who know how much the *Moscovites* have extended the Bounds of the *Empire* along the *Tartarian Sea*, will judge the thing less difficult, besides those who have seen these Countrys, have made Discoveries much differing from those which our *Geographers* have informed us of hitherto. Very lately *Monseieur D'Arcy*, who commands one of the Kings Ships, in the Fleet of *Monseieur Le Marechal d'Estrees*, informed us, that having served in *Poland*, and having been made Governor of a Place towards *Moscovy*, the *Moscovite* Ambassadors in their returne having passed by him, and being by him, treated in such a manner as put them into a very good Humor; one of them shewed him a Chart of the Countrys between *Moscovy* and *China*: and told him, that from 3 Citys which he shewed him, whose Names were *Lopsla*, *Abasinko*, *Nerginsko*, all 3 under the Government of the great Dukes, tho' Situated in the great *Tartary*, there was a Way to *Pekin*,
which